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# News of the HSUS Gulf States Region

## HSUS Condemns Cruelty to Chicks

The recent killing of hundreds of thousands of unwanted baby chicks emphasized man's inhumanity to animals for the sake of profit and the need for outspoken advocates of kindness.

The HSUS Gulf States Regional Office became involved in the controversy at the outset and repeatedly called for the use of humane methods of killing the economically undesirable chickens.

### "Calloused, Barbaric"

"Our concern is the calloused and barbaric way that this is being done," HSUS Gulf States Regional Director Douglas M. Scott said. "Indications point to the fact that some poultry producers have been more concerned about getting publicity than being civilized."

Scott states that his phone began to ring on June 23, when it was learned that NBC News was televising the killing of 43,000 baby chicks by suffocation and drowning in Joaquin, Texas. As baskets of baby chicks were dumped into 55-gallon drums, many of the chicks were suffocated and crushed to death. The drums were then loaded on a garbage truck by a lift, and the chicks were dropped approximately 20 feet to the steel floor of the truck. The chicks were then transported to a landfill where they were buried, dead or alive.

### Weller Investigates

Bernard Weller, field representative for the HSUS Gulf States office, was dispatched to various places in the state to investigate this and other reports of similar killings. His investigation included the Texas towns of Petronila, Bishop, Nixon, Sequin, Smiley, and Center.

Weller discovered that this means of disposing of chicks is common practice. The only difference is that



**To protest reduced profits, many hatcheries dumped newly hatched chicks in garbage cans and had them taken to garbage dumps, where many were buried alive.**

in the past imperfect chicks have been the target, whereas the recent killings involved perfect chicks, supposedly because of economic factors.

One hatchery owner said he did not know how to humanely dispose of chicks when it becomes necessary but wanted to learn.

"It is unfortunate any hatchery owner would have to make such an admission, but we appreciate his honesty," Scott said. "We only hope that others who are involved can be as honest and do what this man has said he wants to do."

HSUS is opposed to needless killing regardless of the reasons. HSUS Staff Veterinarian Robert C. Bay, D.V.M., said that it is possible to know three weeks in advance when eggs will hatch. With some careful planning, the power to the incubators can be turned off to within six hours of the hatching process, allowing the eggs to cool and the embryo to die. The eggs can then be used as fertilizer.

Beyond this, when it is necessary to dispose of chicks, perfect or imperfect, there are humane and inexpensive ways to carry out the

task. The most inexpensive method is by using chloroform. One gallon would humanely dispose of up to 5,000 chicks. Other humane methods would entail the use of carbon dioxide and filtered carbon monoxide.

HSUS's attempts to prosecute hatchery owners involved in this cruelty were thwarted when it was learned that many states do not include either birds or reptiles under anti-cruelty laws.

Scott requests all concerned persons to watch their local hatcheries, ask questions, and keep the Corpus Christi and Washington offices informed about any actions that violate the respect for this form of life. Should violations occur, local and state laws should be checked to see if suits can be brought by local citizens.

### Spay posters

*The Gulf States Office has posters promoting spaying of pets. Order dog or cat, \$1 each postpaid.*

## HSUS Helps Change "Disaster Area" Zoo

HSUS has been working with municipal officials of Sinton, Texas, since last March to obtain major improvements in the city's zoo.

When HSUS zoologist Sue Pressman investigated the zoo last March she found conditions unsatisfactory.

"It was a disaster area," she recalled recently. "It can't remain that way—either it becomes something it wasn't at that time or it must be closed."

Mrs. Pressman and the other members of the investigating team, Gulf States Regional Director Douglas M. Scott and Field Representative Bernard M. Weller, agreed that the sanitation was deplorable.

"It had the worst housekeeping I've ever seen," Mrs. Pressman said. "The sanitation was simply nonexistent."

The investigative team reported finding water slimy green with algae in the animals' water bowls and in the alligator pool. Beer cans, bottle caps, and plastic bags were strewn everywhere, including in the cages, they reported.

Mrs. Pressman told city officials they had too many animals for the small staff available to care for them.

"It's a low-maintenance zoo, and they have many high-maintenance animals," she said.

She advised the city to sell or trade many of the animals and to concentrate on gathering entire families of a few species and displaying them in natural habitat areas.

"The idea of the modern zoo is to show fewer animals doing more things," she told city officials.

Scott and Weller are encouraged by the positive actions that have been taken since March. The city has already begun making plans for larger, natural habitat exhibits and reducing the animal inventory. Additional city employees have been assigned to the zoo maintenance staff, and feeding and cleaning procedures have been improved.

The Gulf States Office will continue to work with Sinton officials until the zoo becomes an educational facility for the community.



**A fully grown tiger is caged in what appears to be a dog pen at the Sinton, Texas, zoo. HSUS is attempting to convince municipal officials that no one can learn anything about a tiger's living habits in such a cage and that the tiger probably isn't happy, either.**

## Scott Investigates Cattle Deaths

HSUS Gulf States Regional Director Douglas M. Scott recently investigated the deaths from neglect of hundreds of cattle in Cameron Parish, La., and counted 30 dead cattle along one highway.

The death of some 700 cattle was reported to the regional office by George Fawcett, editor for the Cameron Parish area for the Lafayette (La.) *Advertiser*. In an article for the *Advertiser*, Fawcett said state and federal agricultural officials believe ranchers have allowed the cattle to starve to death to save on their feed bills. The cattlemen deny the charge.

Fawcett said that Cameron Parish County Agent Clifford Myers, State Agriculture Commissioner David Pearce, and state and federal veterinarian Forrest E. Henderson, D.V.M., claim Cameron Parish

cattlemen have been permitting such starving for more than 50 years.

"It is a kind of tradition around here that these people show very little concern for the animals," Myers said. "It is a real disgrace to let something like this happen."

Law enforcement officials believe there is no means of prosecuting owners for letting their own cattle starve on their own land. The Louisiana anti-cruelty law exempts livestock.

The only way the cruelty can be prevented, agricultural officials agree, is for local humane societies to work actively for legislation that will protect cattle in such situations. In order to prod this action, Scott has written to all local societies in Louisiana asking for their active involvement in solving the problem.

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I enclose \$\_\_\_\_\_ to support continuing programs to combat cruelty in the Gulf States region.

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